

## TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER AXNESS

**HON. TOM LATHAM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 3, 2009*

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the excellence in education in the 4th Congressional District of Iowa, and to specifically congratulate Jennifer Axness of Southeast Webster—Grand Community School District, who earned the National Board Certification—the highest level of certification in the teaching profession.

National Board Certification is a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize and reward great teachers. National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) have successfully demonstrated advanced teaching knowledge, skills and practices. Certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete. Certification is offered in 25 different subjects, covering 97 percent of the subjects taught in K–12 schools.

I congratulate Jennifer Axness on her well-deserved certification, and I'm certain that she will continue to touch the lives of many youth in her community. It is a great honor to represent Jennifer in the United States Congress, and I wish her continued success.

## HONORING PURPLE HEART RECIPIENT WILLIAM W. PRIOR, SR. OF BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA

**HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 3, 2009*

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an American hero and Purple Heart recipient, William W. Prior, Sr. of Brooksville, Florida. Wounded by an enemy torpedo during an engagement in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska, Mr. Prior's service to our Nation will forever be remembered by this Congress.

Born in Tampa, Florida, Mr. Prior spent the early part of his career as a commercial fisherman and was one of five brothers who joined the military during World War II. As someone who loved the sea, when it looked like America might become involved in the war, Mr. Prior joined the United States Navy. Two of his brothers joined the Army, and two joined him in the Navy. While he was hoping to be stationed on a small boat, Mr. Prior was assigned as an aviation radioman and went to Seattle, Washington to begin his service. From there he and his crew were sent to Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

After just a few months on the job, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and the Alaska military members were placed in the midst of some Pacific Coast fighting. While many Americans are not aware of this fact, part of the Aleutian Island chain in Alaska was occupied by the Japanese during World War II. On August 30, 1942, Mr. Prior's ship the USS *Casco* was anchoring in harbor at Nazan Bay close to an island under control of the Japanese. It was at that time that his ship was struck by a torpedo, and Mr. Prior was wounded by shrapnel and knocked unconscious. His

former squadron commander found him and flew Mr. Prior back to Dutch Harbor, where he received surgery to save his leg from amputation. Eventually sent to a naval hospital in California, Mr. Prior was discharged in 1943 from the Navy because of the severity of his wounds.

Madam Speaker, soldiers like William W. Prior, Sr. should be recognized for their service to our Nation and for their commitment and sacrifices in battle. I am honored to present Mr. Prior with his long overdue Purple Heart. His family, friends and loved ones should know that we truly consider him one of America's heroes.

## REMEMBERING ALMONT TOWNSHIP FIRE CHIEF PAUL WILCOX

**HON. CANDICE S. MILLER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 3, 2009*

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of Almont Township Fire Chief Paul Wilcox who sadly passed away on Thursday, January 8th after a hard fought battle with cancer. I offer my deepest sympathy and condolences to all his family members and friends and hope they can find comfort and ease during this very difficult time.

As a former township and State elected official, I had the pleasure and opportunity to meet and work with Chief Wilcox on several issues. I know his leadership, integrity and community service will be greatly missed throughout Lapeer County and the entire State of Michigan. He truly was a great person.

Chief Wilcox amazingly fought fires in the Almont area for over 40 years and served as chief for 23 years. But he took his call of public duty beyond the walls of the fire station by serving in numerous roles such as an instructor at the Lapeer County Fire Academy during the 1970s, Almont and Imlay Township building inspector, member of the 9-1-1 Committee, Lapeer County EMS Committee, National Volunteer Fire Council and as President of the Michigan Fire Chief's Association just to name a few.

Again, I cannot stress enough how great of a loss this is for not only Almont but both Lapeer County and Michigan. Chief Wilcox was an innovative leader and faced any challenge head on. I can remember recently visiting the station and meeting with him and fellow firefighters about a year and a half ago to present a FEMA grant. There wasn't anything he wouldn't do to help the community. He always sought to improve the departments' services and resources for the residents he so proudly served. He was a tireless advocate for the volunteer fire service and took his message and mission to the national level. He raised the bar and set high standards which all future chiefs and firefighters will now need to live up to.

I am extremely grateful to have known Chief Wilcox and for the chance to have called him a friend. Chief Wilcox had announced his intention to retire this spring but unfortunately wasn't afforded that opportunity. Without question, he will be greatly missed but rest assured certainly not forgotten. I offer my sincere gratitude and thanks for his lifetime of dedicated

work and service. My thoughts and prayers go out to all of those who knew Chief Wilcox and may he receive eternal rest.

## TRIBUTE TO GRETCHEN CONWAY

**HON. TOM LATHAM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 3, 2009*

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the excellence in education in the 4th Congressional District of Iowa, and to specifically congratulate Gretchen Conway of Decorah Community School District, who earned the National Board Certification—the highest level of certification in the teaching profession.

National Board Certification is a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize and reward great teachers. National Board Certified Teachers have successfully demonstrated advanced teaching knowledge, skills and practices. Certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete. Certification is offered in 25 different subjects, covering 97 percent of the subjects taught in K-12 schools.

I congratulate Gretchen Conway on her well-deserved certification, and I'm certain that she will continue to touch the lives of many youth in her community. It is a great honor to represent Gretchen in the United States Congress, and I wish her continued success.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE CLUSTER-BASED ECONOMY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2009

**HON. JOHN M. McHUGH**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 3, 2009*

Mr. McHUGH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation, the Cluster-Based Economy Enhancement Act of 2009. This proposal is designed to stimulate collaborative interactions between businesses in regional economies to produce innovation and create jobs.

"Clusters" are geographic concentrations of competing, complementary, or interdependent business entities or industries that do business with one another and have common needs for talent, technology, and infrastructure. The bill recognizes that such clusters boost competitiveness and growth of a region as a whole.

As the recent economic turmoil has highlighted, American industries must become better equipped to thrive in the increasingly competitive global economy. Rather than continuing to see skilled workers move abroad, we need to take actions conducive to the creation of new employment, both through traditional means of expansion and in-sourcing of foreign jobs. As we do so, we must be mindful that there are regions within America, like Central and Northern New York, that continue to struggle disproportionately demanding we seek ways to overcome those challenges to economic development they face.

In response, this legislation would authorize up to \$50 million for cluster-based economic